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REPORT

OF

MAJOR GENERAL LORING.

OF

BATTLE OF BAKER'S CREEK,

AND

SUBSEQUENT MOVEMENTS OF HIS COMMAND.

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PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF CONGRESS.

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MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT.

RICHMOND, VA., Jan. 26, 1864.

*To the Senate and House of Representatives :*

I herewith transmit, for your information, a communication from the Secretary of War, covering a copy of an additional report of military operations during the last year.

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

COMMUNICATION FROM SECRETARY OF WAR.

CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA, }  
War Department, }  
Richmond, Va., Jan. 26, 1864. }

*To the President of the Confederate States :*

SIR : I have the honor to transmit herewith, for the information of Congress, copies of the reports of Major General Loring and his subordinate officers of the battle of Baker's Creek and the subsequent movements of his command.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
JAMES A. SEDDON,  
Secretary of War.

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# BATTLE OF BAKER'S CREEK.

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## REPORT OF MAJOR GENERAL LORING.

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CANTON, MISSISSIPPI, October 30, 1863.

Colonel B. S. EWELL,

*Assistant Adjutant General :*

COLONEL : I have the honor to enclose the reports of operations of my division, during the campaign just closed in this department. I have been delayed in sending them, because of uninterrupted duties in the field and having been subsequently ordered to attend a court of inquiry. I have had no time before this.

With respect, I have the honor to be,

Your obedient servant,

W. W. LORING,

*Major General commanding.*

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HEADQUARTERS LORING'S DIVISION, }  
*Forrest Mississippi, August 27, 1863.* }

Colonel B. S. EWELL,

*Assistant Adjutant General :*

COLONEL : I respectfully state that I was ordered, on the night of the 1st of May, to move, with two regiments and a battery, from Jackson to Port Gibson, by the way of Edwards' depot.

On the 2d of May, while passing within a few miles of Grind-stone ford, on the Bayou Pierre, we learned from a citizen, that General Bowen, in command of a small force, had disputed the road to Port Gibson, and was repulsed by an overwhelming force of the enemy, with heavy loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners, and that after crossing, had destroyed the bridge over the Bayou Pierre opposite the town. We also learned that the enemy was advancing towards the ford, with the view of cutting off Bowen's retreat. The two regiments and battery with us were at once ordered to the ford, with

directions to hold it. The admirable manner in which Colonel A. E. Reynolds performed this duty, prevented the success of the flank movement.

Upon arriving at General Bowen's camp, between the Bayou Pierre and Grand Gulf, we learned that he had made a gallant defence, but was compelled to fall back, as stated; that his reinforcements came too late and in too small numbers to prevent the enemy from landing and afterwards advancing. His information satisfied him that they had a force of near fifty thousand, and that while a portion was threatening his front, a large command was marching to the Grindstone ford for the purpose of turning him. I advised an immediate movement to save the command, then about five thousand strong. General Bowen informed me that in this opinion he concurred, and had deferred the movement until my arrival. Time being all important, at my request, he issued orders for a speedy departure. During the night I was informed that a dispatch had come directing what had already commenced. The admirable manner in which the orders were executed, enabled the command, in good order, to move out with its baggage, destroying all else that could not be carried away. In the course of the early morning, it reached the cross-roads, and soon after commenced the passage of Big Black river, in accordance with orders. In the meantime, the enemy was at the ford in heavy force, the command placed there holding them in check. General Tilghman, with an additional brigade, was ordered to protect the column in its movement to the river, aided by General Lee. This was handsomely done, and we were enabled successfully to cross it. Near here and on both sides of the river we found the remainder of Stevenson's division. After all had crossed, my division was ordered to Bovina, near the railroad, where it arrived on the 4th of May.

With respect, I have the honor to be,

Your obedient servant,

W. W. LORING,

*Major General commanding, &c.*

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HEADQUARTERS CAMP FOREST, MISS., }  
August 28th, 1863. }

Colonel B. S. EWELL,

*Assistant Adjutant General:*

COLONEL: I have the honor to forward, through you, a detailed statement of the operations of my division at the battle of Baker's Creek, and my movements consequent upon it:

On the 13th of May, General Bowen, in command of his division, having reported the enemy advancing, I was ordered to reinforce him with my division; General Stevenson soon after coming up with his division, a very strong position was selected, about one mile south of

Edwards' depot, our left resting on the railroad, and the right not far from Baker's Creek. On the morning of the 14th, General Pemberton ordered a council of war, in which he read a dispatch from General Johnston, which stated, in substance, that the enemy (two or three divisions) was at Clinton, nine miles from Jackson, and (if General Pemberton thought it practicable) advised a movement in connection with him, saying that time was all-important. In the council of war there was great diversity of opinion. Two Generals were for moving at once upon the road to Clinton. Two or three were for remaining or moving back. Three were for striking at the communications of the enemy, keeping our own open with the bridge over Big Black river, and fighting, or not, in a position of our own choosing, as would seem best.

I understood the opinion of the General commanding to be, that he did not approve the move proposed by General Johnston, but coincided with those who were for moving to the enemy's rear. It was determined by the General to move at eight o'clock in the morning, (15th instant,) the army intending to cross Baker's Creek at a ford, which was prevented by its swollen condition. It was, however, put in motion about three or four o'clock, P. M., crossing the creek upon a bridge a short distance above the ford. A map was furnished, marking the road upon which the army was to march, my division being in the advance. After moving four or five miles, we were joined by Major Lockett, chief engineer, who directed the column to take a cross road leading to Mrs. Ellison's house, on the middle Raymond road. At this place the army was to have encamped, it having been discovered that the road which it was intended the entire force should follow, was wrongly laid down upon the map furnished. About dark my division reached Mrs. Ellison's, and found a great scarcity of water. This information was at once communicated to General Pemberton, so that he might make some other disposition of the forces which were following. After dark, it fortunately happened that the other divisions were still upon the road leading from the bridge, and encamped along it in their line of march. It was still more fortunate that my command was upon the middle Raymond road, which led immediately to the ford at which the army was to have crossed in the morning; upon this road the enemy was in large force within a few miles of my camp. Being satisfied of this from prisoners taken, and from observations of several of my staff sent in advance, very large picket forces were placed in my front, rear and right flank. Completing my dispositions, I soon after met General Pemberton, to whom information of the near proximity of the enemy in large force was given; additional information was subsequently given him, establishing the fact that he was in our immediate front.

This was the condition of things until seven or eight o'clock next morning, (16th,) when the General informed us that he had a note from General Johnston, advising a junction with him in the direction of Boonsville, his force having fallen back from Jackson. This necessitated a movement towards Edwards' depot. The General then gave an order for the train, which had not come up, to retrace its



steps. Pending this, it is said, the enemy was in line of battle, preparing to attack us. Moving rapidly upon my pickets, he opened a brisk cannonade. I suggested to General Pemberton that the sooner he formed a line of battle, the better, as the enemy would very soon be upon us. He at first directed me to form Tilghman's brigade in a line of battle upon the ground it then occupied, but soon thought it untenable, and ordered it, with Featherston's and Buford's brigades, (my whole division,) into a line of battle on a ridge about three quarters of a mile in the rear, and across a small creek. This line was almost immediately changed for a ridge still further back, where my artillery was advantageously posted on both sides of the road, the field to the front being entirely open as far as Mrs. Ellison's house. He also directed the division to occupy the road, and the country to the right of it, and, in orders, conveyed to me at different times during the day, he instructed me to hold my position, not attacking the enemy unless he attempted to outflank us. Bowen's command was extended so as to join mine on the road. Soon a series of orders came, specifically and with great particularity, for two of my brigades to move to the left, closing the line as often as Bowen moved, and we, in this manner, followed him. During this time, I received an order to retire, also one to advance, both of which were countermanded. My whole division, including reserves, was strung out in line of battle, mostly in thick timber. The enemy, during these movements, remained steadily in front, in heavy force, being apparently a full corps, occupying a series of ridges, wooded and commanding each other, forming, naturally, a very strong, if not impregnable position, throwing forward a heavy line of skirmishers, and showing every indication of an attack in force upon my position, both in front and upon the right flank. General Bowen also informed me that he thought the enemy was moving to the right.

While these movements were going on, (all of which were brought to the General's attention,) desultory firing was heard on the extreme left, and General Bowen was summarily ordered in that direction, without warning either to myself or to General Buford, commanding a brigade of my division next to him. Not long after, I was ordered to send a brigade to the left, and General Buford went at a double-quick. While passing Bowen, two regiments were detached and went into the fight with that command, Buford continuing on the left. [See his report annexed.] In a half or three-quarters of an hour one brigade was ordered to be left on the road, and the other to be taken by myself to the left. This was most earnestly requested to be done by Colonel Withers, in command of the artillery, who feared the capture of his guns. He tells me that he was gratified in being able to state that my force arrived sooner than he expected, and in time to save his artillery. But for our prompt arrival every piece would have been lost, as the whole sustaining force had, except a few bold skirmishers, been driven back.

Upon the approach of Featherston's brigade, in rapid march, a considerable force of the retreating army having been rallied behind him, the enemy, who was advancing upon the artillery, fell back in

great disorder, Colonel Withers pouring in a most destructive fire upon him. It was here that we witnessed a scene ever to be remembered. Here the gallant Withers and his brave men, with their fine park of artillery, stood, unflinchingly, amid a shower of shot and shell, awaiting the approach of an enemy in overwhelming force, after his supports had been driven back, and trusting that a succoring command would arrive in time to save his batteries, and displaying a degree of courage and determination that calls for the most unqualified admiration. Upon my arrival upon this part of the field, I found the whole country on both sides of the road covered with the flying of our army, in many cases in large squads, and, as there was no one endeavoring to rally or direct them, I at once placed my escort under an efficient officer of my staff, with orders to gather up the stragglers and those in retreat away from the road. This duty was performed with great energy and success. It was also determined that, under these circumstances, it was necessary, in order to save large numbers of men and guns, as well as to be able, in case the emergency should arise, to retire the army in safety and good order to the ford over Baker's Creek, along the only road open to it, that a vigorous and well-directed attack should be made upon the enemy. At this moment I met General Lee and Colonel Withers, and was satisfied from information obtained from them, that by such an attack upon the enemy's right, during the panic which had befallen his centre, we could overwhelm it, retrieve the day, certainly cut him off from the bridge on our extreme left, of which it was highly important we should hold possession, and save our scattered forces. Dispositions were at once made for the attack, in which General Lee lent a cordial and able assistance. This fine officer, with General Green, and portions of their gallant brigades, we found fighting the enemy where all others, except the brave Withers had been driven back, and contesting every step of the enemy's advancing columns, Green declaring that he never would have been driven back, but for the fact that he had not a cartridge left.

While thus engaged, I received an order for the forces to fall back, and my assistant adjutant general, who had been dispatched to General Pemberton for orders, returned, stating that the General said that the movement must not be made—that I must order a retreat and bring up the rear. Officers were immediately sent to advise those not yet informed to retire, and as rapidly as possible, in the direction of the ford, that being the only road left open. As soon as the enemy realized that we were leaving the field, he rallied and moved forward in heavy force. In the meantime, Featherston's brigade was put into position to protect the rear of the retreating forces, and to cover the falling back of Buford's brigade. This duty was ably and gallantly executed. This latter brigade (Buford's) about this time met a charge of the enemy's infantry, cavalry and artillery, and repulsed him in splendid style with great slaughter. The heavy fighting being done by the twelfth Louisiana, a large regiment, under the able and daring Scott. This and the gallant Goodwin's thirty-fifth Alabama regiment had also distinguished themselves in the charge upon the enemy's

centre; and, about this time, the brave Baker, of the thirty-fourth Alabama, was severely wounded in another part of the field. During this time, Tilghman, who had been left with his brigade upon the other road, almost immediately after our parting, met a terrible assault of the enemy, and, when we rejoined him, was carrying on a deadly and most gallant fight. With less than fifteen hundred effective men, he was attacked by from six to eight thousand of the enemy, with a fine park of artillery, but, being advantageously posted, he not only held him in check, but repulsed him on several occasions, and thus kept open the only line of retreat left to the army. The bold stand of this brigade, under the lamented hero, saved a large portion of the army. It is befitting that I should speak of the death of the gallant and accomplished Tilghman. Quick and bold in the execution of his plans, he fell in the midst of a brigade that loved him well, after repulsing a powerful enemy in deadly fight, struck by a cannon shot. A brigade wept over the dying hero—alike beautiful as it was touching! I had, some time before this, sent an Adjutant to General Pemberton, and, subsequently, another to ascertain how his retreating forces were progressing, but, having left the field, it was impossible to communicate with him. The officer, on his return, informed me that he had met General Bowen at the ford, who had requested him to say to me: "For God's sake, hold your position until sundown, and save the army." He could hold the ford and the bridge was safe. I had scarcely received this message when General Bowen sent me a written communication, stating that the enemy had crossed the bridge and had outflanked him, that he had been compelled precipitately to fall back, and that I must do my best to save my division. I also received a note from Lieutenant Colonel Jacob Thompson to the same import. We at once made a movement toward the ford, there being no other road of retreat. There being none on my left that I could use, and being wholly unacquainted with the country, my only guide having been taken by General Pemberton to direct him to Big Black bridge, my first determination was to force my way through by the ford, and rode rapidly to reconnoitre, arriving there it was found that our troops were gone, some of them having been driven back upon us. The enemy's skirmishers were advancing, and a heavy force occupied the commanding ridge across the creek, his artillery playing upon the crossings. The enemy upon our right flank and rear had been reinforced, so that we were enveloped upon three sides, leaving no road to move upon.

Not far from my place of observation, I met Dr. Williamson, a highly respectable gentleman of Edwards' depot, who said he knew the whole country, and thought he could take me to a ford on Baker's Creek, three or four miles below. By this time darkness was approaching. I at once decided upon this move. By a well concerted movement we eluded the enemy upon three sides, and, to his astonishment, made our flank march from between his forces across the fields to a given point in the woods skirting Baker's Creek. The night being dark, and the trail a blind one, it was found impossible to get through by following the creek. It was then determined to

move across to another road, and reach the ford in that direction. My command being compelled to move back upon the ground where the battle was fought, passed the enemy's camp fires, and at times our small parties were near enough to hear them. The unused plantation roads, upon which we moved, were in such bad condition as to render it impossible to carry our artillery over them, and we were obliged to destroy that which we had with our commands, bringing the horses and harness with us, the balance having gone with the army into Vicksburg. Soon after striking the timber, we discovered Edwards' depot and Withers' gin-house on fire, which convinced us that our forces had passed those points, but as we were led to believe that we could reach the lower ford in three or four miles, it was hoped that we could pass in between Edwards' depot and Big Black bridge and rejoin the army. Instead of three or four, it was ten or twelve miles before my command reached the Lower Raymond road, which led to the ford, and then it was after midnight. My guide, Dr. Williamson, informed us that it was impossible to guide the division to Big Black bridge with the enemy in possession of Edwards' depot, which we were convinced he had held for several hours, but referred us to a gentleman by the name of Vaughn, who lived within a mile of the road. I went to his house, and brought him to the column, to consult with my generals, and proposed that he should take us to Big Black river. He declared that it was impossible, as all the lower fords over Baker's Creek were swimming, and that to Big Black bridge he could not take us without moving through the enemy's lines at Edwards' depot. He also informed us that a large force of the enemy had that day passed by his house. It was known that the enemy had troops at all ferries over Big Black below the mouth of Baker's Creek, and that the river was a deep and difficult stream to cross. The condition of the command was also taken into consideration; being without artillery, with but few rounds of cartridges, having no implements for the immediate construction of a bridge or ferry; our entire train having gone into Vicksburg, and being without supplies of any kind, also the distance to the river was so great that it would have been impossible to have reached it until late next day, when the enemy was sure to have been posted to prevent crossing. After a full consultation with my brigadiers, all of us were of the opinion that it was impossible to attempt the passage of Big Black at any point, and in doing so the entire division would certainly be lost. Subsequent events have fully shown that we were right in this determination. It was then determined to force the rear of the enemy between Raymond and Utica.

On the evening of the 17th, my command, after a hard march, reached Crystal Spring, a village on the New Orleans and Jackson railroad, twenty-five miles south of Jackson. On the 19th, reached Jackson, with my entire division, few lingering by the way, and immediately reported to General Johnston, who expressed his gratification that my command had safely arrived.

Of Generals Featherston and Buford, and Colonel A. E. Reynolds, commanding brigades, whose reports are herewith annexed, too much

cannot be said in commendation. The rapidity and skill with which they executed their orders, and the boldness with which their gallant commands met and successfully repulsed the powerful attack of the enemy, delaying the Yankee army and securing a safe retreat to ours across the ford, entitles them to the highest praise, and finally in lending themselves a sacrifice, enveloped as they were upon three sides—front, right flank and rear—undismayed, with a proud consciousness of having done their whole duty, they withdrew in good order from under fire, in face of the enemy, and thus we were enabled to make the dangerous but successful movement to the left.

My staff, Captain Henry Robinson, assistant adjutant general, Captain Bensley, chief of artillery, Captain Mickle, assistant quartermaster, Captain John D. Myrick, Lieutenant Hanson, aid-de-camp, Captain Sykes, aid-de-camp, Captain Henry De Veuve, assistant engineer, Henry Taylor and William McFarland, volunteer aids, Captain Russell and Dr. Williamson, guides, were continually under fire, and bore themselves, as on other fields, with courage and ability.

With respect, I have the honor to be,

Your obedient servant,

W. W. LORING,

*Major General commanding, &c.*

## REPORT OF BRIGADIER GENERAL BUFORD.

HEADQUARTERS BUFORD'S BRIGADE, LORING'S DIVISION, }  
June 16, 1863. }

To Major General LORING,  
*Commanding Division :*

GENERAL: I have the honor to make the following report of the operations of my brigade (the third brigade of the division) in and around Edwards' depot, on Saturday, the 16th of May, 1863, and on the march from Baker's Creek to Jackson, Mississippi :

My brigade consisted of the following regiments: Twelfth Louisiana regiment, Colonel Thomas M. Scott commanding; fifty-fourth Alabama regiment, Colonel Alpheus Baker commanding; seventh Kentucky regiment, Colonel Ed. Crossland commanding; ninth Arkansas regiment, Colonel J. H. Dunlap commanding; four companies third Kentucky regiment, Major J. H. Bowman commanding; thirty-fifth Alabama regiment, Colonel Edward Goodwin commanding; Snodgrass' Alabama regiment, Colonel John Snodgrass commanding, and twenty-seventh Alabama regiment, Colonel James Jackson commanding—making an aggregate of three thousand and five effective men. The Point Coupee artillery, consisting of two companies, A and C, four guns each, was also attached to my brigade, under command of Captain Bowanchand. The eighth Kentucky also belonged to my command, but, having been mounted two days previous, were detached. We were encamped at Ratliffe's, about half a mile in rear of Mrs. Ellison's, on the Raymond road.

On the evening of the 15th May, the thirty-fifth Alabama regiment was detailed for picket duty, and was in advance some two miles.

About eight o'clock, on the morning of the 16th May, the report of artillery announced that the enemy were advancing immediately in front of the division, which formed the right wing of the army, (my brigade being on the left of the right wing.) Dispositions were at once made to meet the advance, and I was ordered to form a line of battle on the ground on which I had bivouacked, it being a covered position, approached through an open field, and quite defensible. My right rested on the road, and my left extended to an open field, through which the cross road passed, on which we had marched the evening previous.

My line was scarcely formed when I was ordered by Lieutenant General Pemberton to advance and occupy the ground on which Brigadier General Green, of General Bowen's division, had formed his brigade, which was in my front and to the left. Informing you of the order, I advanced from the covered position I held, and formed, as ordered, on a commanding eminence in the middle of a field, and over which the enemy must advance. The position was a very strong one and tenable.

My line had not been entirely rectified when I received orders to

fall back with my brigade some half a mile and establish a line beyond the junction of the military road with the road leading to Raymond by Mrs. Ellison's. My right to rest on the road, and extending to the right of General Bowen's division. I was here joined by the thirty-fifth Alabama regiment, which had been ordered to fall back before the enemy. I joined the line as directed, which enabled me to hold one regiment in reserve. This position was in the midst of a dense timber, opening on a grove around the residence of Mr. Ratliffe. My artillery was placed in position on the right and left of the road by Captain Bensley, chief of artillery of division, and was detached from my command during the day.

I had received a request from General Bowen so to alter my line by moving to the left as to unite with his right, as he had moved to the left to join General Stevenson's right. Informing you of the request, I was ordered to comply therewith, which I did, extending my line some six hundred yards, and throwing forward into line the regiment I had intended to hold in reserve.

In about twenty minutes I received information from Gen. Bowen that he had advanced half a mile to the left and front, followed by an order from General Pemberton to throw my line forward so as to rest on the right of General Bowen's position. Transmitting the order to you for information, I promptly complied with the same, my new position being about one hundred yards in rear of my first one, on a line with the skirmishers of the first and second brigades, my own skirmishers, (whom I had placed under command of Lieutenant Colonel Rogers, of the ninth Arkansas,) being some five hundred yards in advance. I here remained until about three o'clock, P. M., when, from the heavy firing in the direction of the left, it was evident that the enemy had massed his forces and was throwing them on the left wing of the army. About that time I was informed that General Bowen's division had been moved still further to the left, and I was ordered by you to proceed without delay to the left of Gen. Bowen's division. I placed my brigade at once in motion, by the left flank and at the double-quick. My command double-quickened the distance, about two miles, under a scorching sun, through corn and rye fields, in about half an hour. When I arrived about the rear of the right wing of General Bowen's division, which was falling back in disorder before an overpowering force of the enemy, I was ordered by General Pemberton to hold the road immediately in rear of General Lee's brigade, at a point about half a mile from the negro cabins.

Across this road our men were hastening in wild disorder and in consternation before a very heavy fire of the enemy. I immediately entered the road and was advancing on it in column, when my front (the left) was brought under a most galling fire from the enemy's sharpshooters, and their line, some two hundred yards distant, posted in a heavy thicket of timber and undergrowth unexposed to view. I found that the enemy held possession of the road, and that I must retake it in order to comply with the command of General Pemberton. It would have been a wanton destruction of life to have formed a line of battle with my brigade in its then position, marching, as it was, by

the left flank on the road, and a portion of which had already changed direction to the left in order to enter it under the heavy fire of the enemy, hidden from view, exposed, too, to an enfilading fire from a battery which had been established by the enemy on a commanding eminence at short range, and at the same time my column was continually broken by men of other brigades, who, driven back, were rushing pell mell from the scene of action and resisting all attempts made to rally them.

My command being thus fully exposed to the enemy, I changed direction of the head of the column to the left about one hundred and fifty yards from the crest of the rise in the road occupied by the enemy to a covered position and formed the brigade. Two of my strongest regiments were detached from the rear of my brigade as it passed the cabins—one by order of General Pemberton, the other by order of General Bowen. The strength of my brigade at this critical moment was thus unceremoniously and materially reduced. This being done without my knowledge and without any report being made to me of the fact by the generals who gave the orders, I awaited the approach of the enemy, who must advance through an open clear space. The enemy, however, halted in the road and established a battery. To have charged him from my position, with my brigade reduced in strength, and over an open space of several hundred yards, would have cost it half its numbers. I therefore moved the brigade by the right flank to a position protected by timber to the ground occupied by the enemy with the view of moving against the position held by him in the road. I had not completed the disposition of my command, when I discovered that the enemy was rapidly turning both the right and left flanks of the position I held, as well as that occupied by him, against which I proposed to move. In all probability I might have taken the position at a great sacrifice, but it would be untenable, and I would have been forced to have given it up almost immediately, besides running the risk of having my entire brigade captured, as I was entirely without support, my strength reduced nearly one-third by the regiments being detached, and as all the troops of our centre and of the left wing were leaving the field in great disorder, I therefore threw my brigade back about a quarter of a mile from the negro cabins, and in the direction of Edward's depot, on a commanding position, where I joined you with General Featherston's brigade.

I was ordered to move my brigade into position so as to move against the enemy's right, and pierce his line and thus, by a vigorous and well-directed attack, force him to abandon the field, it having been reported that his centre was falling back, and thus retrieve the day. I was joined here by the twelfth Louisiana and thirty-fifth Alabama regiments, and moved rapidly forward and was forming in position, when I was informed by one of my staff officers that you had received positive orders to withdraw the forces from the field, and had commenced retiring. I immediately ordered the brigade to march by the left flank, and rejoined you then on the retreat to Baker's Creek. Being informed that a section of artillery, with a support of infantry, had been detailed as a rear guard, I moved forward, but was soon in-



formed that the enemy was pressing on my rear, both with cavalry, infantry and artillery, and that one piece of the Point Coupee battery had been abandoned, as the horses were killed by the sharpshooters so as to render it an impossibility to remove it. This battery had been brought from its original position to the left, and ordered by Colonel Withers, chief of artillery department, to send four pieces to Vicksburg, and follow in retreat in rear of the brigade with the remainder, but had not, as yet, reported to me. The artillery and infantry, ordered to protect the rear, after allowing a portion of my brigade to pass, had, for some reason unknown to me, moved forward, and thus left my rear exposed. I immediately posted the twelfth Louisiana regiment, with a section of artillery from the Point Coupee battery, in line, with orders to repel the advance of the enemy, and made dispositions to support them. The enemy charged forward, but were met by the fire of the twelfth Louisiana, and the artillery which effectually checked the ardor of his pursuit, and caused him to follow our immediate rear with great caution.

I was then ordered to move to the rear of General Featherston's brigade, which had been placed in position to meet any advance of the enemy, and form in his rear to support Cowan's battery of Withers' artillery, which was engaging a battery of the enemy, and protecting the retreat of Tilghman's brigade, General Tilghman having gallantly lost his life in directing the fire of his artillery. I would offer my tribute of respect to his gallant bearing and his noble devotion and untiring energy in behalf of our cause alike on the field of battle and in the private circles.

I formed a line in rear of the battery on a commanding position, (here losing several wounded, and Captain Isbell, of the twenty-seventh Alabama regiment, killed,) ordering the twelfth Louisiana regiment to proceed to my rear and form at right angles to the road, and hold it so that we could gain the ford, now about a mile distant.

A message was brought from General Bowen, that he had been forced to abandon his position at the ford, as the enemy were flanking him and were between him and Edwards' depot. I was ordered to proceed to the ford and support General Bowen whilst he drew off. The twelfth Louisiana regiment, which had been ordered to form in my rear as stated above, had received orders from General Stevenson to move forward to the ford in advance of my brigade, and, as I learned, several days afterwards, had already crossed the creek under a heavy fire of artillery. From the firing on our right it was evident that the enemy had obtained possession of the bridge across the creek on the upper road, and was endeavoring to reach Edwards' depot, and thus cut off our retreat. General Bowen had retired, and when near the ford it was clearly perceptible that the enemy, with his artillery, was raking the same, and, at the same time, advancing his columns in that direction. Finding that it was impossible to cross the creek under the fire of the enemy and the dispositions of his infantry, you ordered me to turn my column to the left, and, by going through a plantation, seek a ford lower down. Sending for the twelfth Louisiana regiment to rejoin the brigade immediately, and, by no means, to

attempt to cross the ford, as the enemy was in possession thereof. I turned the column to the left, passed through the plantation, and endeavored to find a ford, but could not. It was then determined to try to reach a ford still lower down, distant two and a half miles, and, under the guidance of Dr. Williamson, whom I had secured, moved forward. To his knowledge of the country and the plantation roads, we are largely indebted for our safe deliverance.

As the enemy were pressing us in front, in rear, and on the flank, it became necessary to move with great caution, and only over neighborhood roads and paths long unused. It soon became evident that the artillery could not travel over the paths which necessity forced us to take. Some of the pieces were, therefore, abandoned, after using all possible means of saving them, which the retreat, nature of the ground, and the presence of the enemy permitted. They were abandoned, however, only after rendering them useless to the enemy.

We moved until near the ford we sought, and to gain which we had marched ten or twelve miles, instead of two or three, and to a point where we had information that we could secure a guide. From him we learned that the ford was impassable, and that he could not pilot us, during the darkness of the night, to the fortifications near Big Black bridge, without crossing the lines of the enemy. The large fires on our right, evidenced that the Yankees were at their usual work of arson in and around Edwards' depot.

A consultation was called by you, and the facts laid before us. I expressed the opinion that, to reach Vicksburg, we must cross the Big Black river at some of the lower ferries, undoubtedly in presence of the enemy, and, to reach even the nearest ferry, we would have to march during the entire night, and, if we crossed in safety, would be in danger of being cut off. Our men were somewhat demoralized, our artillery abandoned, the troops intensely fatigued. We had but a few rounds of ammunition, the greater part of which would be ruined by swimming the river, as we had no means to build a bridge or boat. We had information that the enemy was crossing the river at several of the lower ferries, and the guide had declared it was impossible to pilot us to the fortifications without penetrating the lines of the enemy, hence, our only feasible way of escape, and to save the division, was to move to the rear of the enemy, and pass on his flank in the direction of the Jackson and New Orleans railroad.

By neighborhood roads we moved during the night, passing the flank of the enemy, hourly expecting an attack, hearing the enemy conversing as we passed along, and crossing ravines and creeks which proved the impossibility of moving artillery, and about three o'clock, A. M., Sunday morning, reached Dillon's, on the road from Grand Gulf to Raymond, and but a few miles distant from the battle field. We thence marched to Crystal Springs, on the Jackson and New Orleans railroad, near which we camped on Sunday night. We had marched steadily for twenty-four hours, a distance of forty miles, stopping but short intervals to rest, and without provisions. The men were so exhausted that they fell as they came into camp, and nature sternly demanded rest and sleep. On Monday, we moved

towards Pearl river, and thence continued the march to Jackson, which we reached on Wednesday, the 20th of May.

The troops of this brigade bore the march with great fortitude, making little, if any, complaint. My entire loss in killed and wounded during the engagement of Saturday, was eleven killed and forty-nine wounded. Among the former were Captain W. A. Isbell, company I, and Lieutenant T. S. Taylor, of company I, twenty-seventh Alabama regiment, and Lieutenant George C. Hubbard, acting as first lieutenant of company F, thirty-fifth Alabama regiment. The latter officer, being on a visit to the regiment, was assigned temporarily to duty by request of the captain. These officers are worthy of all commendation as such, and their loss is felt. Among the wounded was Colonel A. Baker, commanding fifty-fourth Alabama regiment, who was wounded early in the engagement near the negro cabins.

I would call attention to the accompanying reports of Colonel Scott, commanding twelfth Louisiana regiment, [marked A,] of Colonel Goodwin, commanding thirty-fifth Alabama regiment, [marked B,] and of Captain Bowanchand, commanding Point Coupee artillery, [marked C.] These were detached from my command during the greater portion of the engagement. These officers sustained the high reputation they have won on other fields. For particular mention of officers under their command, I refer to the reports. The other regiments were directly under my immediate observation during the whole day, and I was more than gratified at the gallant bearing of the commanding officers, as well as that of the other field and company officers. To say that I am proud to command the brigade, evinces but slightly the high regard and estimation I have for the troops. Their quickness of motion, their ardor, powers of endurance and steadiness exhibited during the engagement of Saturday, and on the retreat, are worthy of mention.

In conclusion, I would mention, in a grateful manner, the obligations I am under to the members of my staff for their efficiency and promptness in carrying out my orders.

I have the honor to be, your obedient servant,

A. BUFORD,  
*Brigadier General.*

## REPORT OF COLONEL SCOTT.

JACKSON, MISS., May 28, 1863.

Brigadier General BUFORD,  
*Commanding Brigade :*

GENERAL: I have the honor to report that, on the 16th instant, about one o'clock, P. M., I was detached from your command, by order of Lieutenant General Pemberton, to go to the right of General Green's brigade, (then engaged,) and attack a Federal force then attempting to turn General Green's right flank. Upon arriving on the ground I found General Green's brigade (or, at least, the right of it) retiring from the field in great confusion. I immediately formed my line at right angles to the line occupied by General Green's forces, and ordered my men forward. We were soon greeted with a heavy fire, which was returned with spirit. I ordered my men to fire, advancing, which they did with great steadiness and precision. I advanced to within forty to fifty yards of a line of two regiments, when they retreated and formed in another line of three regiments, posted in a strong position on the crest of the hill. They all soon opened a heavy fire on me, when finding that the contest was too unequal, I determined to try cold steel. I caused the firing to cease, bayonets to be fixed, and ordered my men to make a steady advance in line without yelling, (that they might hear my commands,) and never was an order more implicitly obeyed. We charged the entire brigade, and caused them to fly in great confusion. I held the ground until ordered by you to join the brigade. I here lost five killed and thirty-four wounded. I did not consider it prudent to pursue the enemy, as a heavy line was advancing on my left flank, (the same force that General Green had engaged.) The sharpshooters had commenced firing on me from the left flank, when I changed front to rear on my first company, intending to fight the enemy if pursued. They did not move on me at all, so I joined your brigade without any further engagement, bringing my wounded to a field hospital which afterwards fell into the hands of the enemy. You allowed me to rest my men some fifteen or twenty minutes, after which I moved at the head of the brigade in the direction of Edwards' depot. We had not proceeded more than three quarters of a mile when I heard firing in the rear. You ordered me to form a line at right angles to the road, in an excellent position, and the remainder of the brigade retired to the rear of my line. They were hotly pressed by a force of the enemy's cavalry, preceded by dismounted skirmishers. I had my men concealed behind the crest of the hill, and allowed them to come within range, when I fired by rank upon them with great effect, causing them to retire precipitately. I was now ordered by you to proceed to the main road leading to Edwards' depot, and take a good position, and hold it until you arrived with the brigade. I selected, but did not occupy the position, as Major General Stevenson ordered me to push on and

cross Baker's Creek (some half a mile west of me.) Upon arriving with my command at the creek, I found General Stevenson, who told me that it was impossible to reach Edwards' depot, as it was in possession of the enemy, and that my command would have to pass under a heavy fire from the enemy's batteries, (then shelling us, but overshooting,) and ordered me to join my brigade. I had proceeded but a few yards when he called to me to push through, as he had just heard that the enemy had not possession of Edwards' depot. I immediately started for that point, crossed Baker's Creek, and went half a mile, in good range, and under heavy fire of at least six pieces of the enemy's artillery, but they overshot us invariably, not one shot taking effect. After going from three quarters to one mile west of Baker's Creek, I was overtaken by a courier from you, ordering me to join the brigade immediately. I retraced my steps under a fire of several pieces of artillery. The enemy also opened a battery in the direction of Edwards' depot, and were moving a heavy column of infantry towards the bridge. The skirmishers commenced firing upon our stragglers immediately in the rear of my regiment. This was after sunset. My regiment was the last command to cross Baker's Creek, and no other could have crossed without heavy fighting, under disadvantages, as the enemy held the hills commanding the crossing with a heavy force, within supporting distance. Between Edwards' depot and Baker's Creek, I found your brigade moving to the south. I joined it some three quarters of a mile from the creek. With its future movements you are familiar. I cannot close, General, without paying a just tribute to the gallantry and unflinching courage of my officers and men.

Where all did well, special attention was only attracted by those holding conspicuous positions. Among those deserving honorable mention are Lieutenant Colonel Noel S. Nelson, Major Thomas C. Standifer, Sergeant Major H. Brummer and Color Sergeant Eli Cole.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

THOS. M. SCOTT,  
Colonel Twelfth Louisiana regiment.

## REPORT OF COLONEL GOODWIN.

HEADQUARTERS THIRTY-FIFTH REGIMENT ALABAMA VOLS., }  
Camp near Jackson, Miss., May 28, 1863. }

Captain THOMAS M. CROWDER,  
*Assistant Adjutant General:*

CAPTAIN: In accordance with an order from brigade headquarters, I most respectfully beg leave to submit the following as a report of the operations of the thirty-fifth regiment Alabama volunteers, on the night of the 15th May, also on the 16th of May, 1863:

At deep dusk, on the evening of the 15th instant, I received an order, directly from General Buford in person, to report, with my command, to the headquarters of Major General Loring, which were established about one mile in advance of the division, on the Upper Edwards' Depot and Raymond road.

General Loring ordered me to move the regiment about one mile in advance of his quarters, and to picket the road at the point which his engineer should select. On reaching this point, I detailed company F to picket several hundred yards in advance of the regiment, and from this place I threw out videttes, giving to each the instructions I had received from the General. The twenty-second Mississippi regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Reid commanding, was sent out to support me. During the night an occasional gun was fired by the cavalry pickets of each army.

In the morning of the 16th May, the skirmishing between our cavalry pickets and that of the enemy became very brisk. About seven o'clock I rode to the front, both with a view to confer with Colonel Adams, and, if possible, to ascertain the strength of the foe. The Federal cavalry were drawn up in an open field, at intervals of forty or fifty yards, and were slowly advancing, driving in our videttes. Behind this cavalry I discovered a long battle line of infantry, and I also discovered that they were moving their skirmishers to the right. I hastened back to my regiment, and prepared to contest every inch of ground with them back to our army. I had scarcely formed my line of battle before the enemy began to shell me from a battery which he had planted a short distance to my right. Notwithstanding the shell burst over and about my command in every direction, yet they stood firm, ready to meet the advancing foe. From this shelling the twenty-second Mississippi had two men very severely wounded. I threw out a company of skirmishers, (company B,) who soon engaged the Federal sharpshooters. About half-past eight o'clock, I received an order from General Loring to fall back in good order to the main army. I then fell back till I came to Colonel Reid's regiment. Being the senior officer, I ordered Colonel Reid to fall back one hundred yards, and reform his line of battle. I reformed upon the ground he left. Company B, thirty-fifth Alabama regiment, and a company from the twenty-second Mississippi, which I had ordered to be sent to the support

of my company, were engaging the enemy vigorously. Knowing that they were trying to outflank me, I kept videttes on my flank. I thus continued my retreat slowly, until I received a second order from General Loring to bring the regiments in immediately. I then promptly rejoined the brigade.

On being moved from the right to the left of our general line of battle, in the afternoon, as the brigade was passing near the negro cabins, General Bowen rode up to me, inquiring of me what regiment that was. I told him; whereupon he ordered me to follow him. Placing me under the guidance of an aid, who conducted me directly to the front one hundred yards, I was ordered to move straight forward until I met the foe. Pausing long enough to fix bayonets, I moved in the direction indicated by General Bowen's aid, until I came up with General Green, who ordered me to move to the right, to the support of the first Missouri battery, which was in great danger. This I did promptly, forming in the rear of the battery. The battery, being reassured by the appearance of the regiment, rushed with enthusiasm to their guns, and, for an hour, worked them with a celerity and daring that I doubt never has been surpassed during this war. The enemy poured volley after volley of shot, shell, grape and canister upon us, but, owing to a fortunate position, I lost only one man—Lieutenant George C. Hubbard, who, being on a visit to the regiment, was assigned to temporary duty as first lieutenant in company F, by request of the captain. The enemy being driven off, the battery retired from the field, having exhausted its ammunition. Just as the battery drove off, the enemy had moved around to the left, and were giving me an enfilading fire. I therefore changed my front to meet him, in the meantime sending a courier to General Green for further orders. At this time our friends gave way, and came rushing to the rear, panic stricken. I rushed to the front and ordered them to halt, but they heeded neither my orders nor those of their commanders. I brought my regiment to the charge bayonets, but even this could not check them in their flight. The colors of three regiments passed through the thirty-fifth. Both my officers and men, undismayed, united with me in trying to cause them to rally. We collared them, begged them and abused them in vain. At length I received orders from General Green to follow the battery. I accordingly moved out in rear of the twelfth Louisiana, and, at my urgent solicitation, was permitted to rejoin the brigade.

Hoping this report may prove satisfactory to the General,

I am, very respectfully,

EDWARD GOODWIN,  
*Colonel Thirty-Fifth Regiment Alabama Volunteers.*

## REPORT OF COLONEL REYNOLDS.

HEADQUARTERS FIRST BRIGADE, FIRST DIVISION, }  
Near Jackson, Miss., May 27, 1863. }

MAJOR: In obedience to orders, I beg leave to submit the following report of the part taken by this brigade in the battle of Baker's Creek, on the 16th instant:

At nine o'clock, on the morning of that day, Brigadier General Tilghman, commanding brigade, received orders to move it, from just beyond Ellison's house, where it had bivouacked Friday night, to a ridge about half a mile in our rear. The order was immediately obeyed, and, in the formation of the line of battle, its proper position, the right of the division, was assigned it. From this time up to about twelve, M., nothing of importance occurred. At that time the whole division changed position by the left flank, Brigadier General Buford moving to the support of Brigadier General Bowen, on his left, Brigadier General Featherston closing up so as to be in supporting distance, and Brigadier General Tilghman with his brigade and two batteries, (the Cowan battery, six guns, of Wither's regiment of artillery, and the McLendon battery, four guns, of Ward's battalion,) by direction of the Major General commanding division, taking position on the Raymond and Edwards' Depot road, to prevent a flank movement of the enemy down it on our right. At the same time, he was told to hold himself in readiness to move up to the support of the other brigades of the division, should it become necessary.

About one o'clock, this order was received from Lieutenant General Pemberton. In anticipation of the movement, Lieutenant Macfarland, of the Major General's staff, had some time before been sent to Brigadier General Tilghman, to point out the road by which he should move. Captain Ellis, the assistant adjutant general of General Tilghman, accompanied Lieutenant Macfarland far enough to have it shown him; but upon making the move, and going beyond the point to which Captain Ellis had been carried by Lieutenant Macfarland, the route was found to be impracticable for artillery. As soon as this became evident, General Tilghman countermarched the brigade, and moving down the Raymond and Edwards' Depot road about a quarter of a mile, took a new right-hand road, which communicated with our left wing, intending to join Major General Loring by this route; but after proceeding only a few hundred yards, Lieutenant General Pemberton met the brigade and ordered it back to a position on the main road we had just left, informing General Tilghman, at the same time, that an order countermarching the one to move, and directing him to retain his position, had been sent to him nearly an hour before. Whilst conversing with him, Major Lockhart, chief engineer of the department, rode up with the order, and informed General Pemberton that, owing to the breaking down of his horse, he had been unable to reach General Tilghman.



At the time of the movement from our first position on the Raymond and Edwards' Depot road, and before the rear of the brigade had crossed that road, a heavy column of the enemy was seen advancing, in line of battle, out of the woods immediately around Ellison's house. Colonel R. Lowry, of the sixth Mississippi regiment, who was in the rear, was at once directed to throw out a heavy line of skirmishers to protect the movement. Upon the brigades countermarching, this line of skirmishers, (composing nearly one half of the regiment,) moving too far to the left, became separated from the brigade, and, uniting itself with the left wing of the army, fell back with it, first to Big Black bridge, and thence to Vicksburg, where it is at present, under the command of Major Stevens.

Soon after the formation of the second line of battle, at half past one o'clock, Major General Loring came up with the other two brigades of the division, and formed them immediately on the left of the first brigade. He informed General Tilghman that the left wing of the army was retreating to the Big Black, and that, in order to cover the movement, General Pemberton had directed him to maintain his position, at all hazards, until sundown.

The enemy having taken possession of the hill abandoned by us, a continuous fire from both artillery and skirmishers was kept up until dark. At twenty minutes past five o'clock, Brigadier General Lloyd Tilghman, who, up to that time, had commanded the brigade with marked ability, fell, killed by a shell from one of the enemy's guns, and the command devolved upon me as the senior colonel present. I cannot here refrain from paying a slight tribute to the memory of my late commander. As a man, a soldier and a General, he had few, if any, superiors. Always at his post, he devoted himself to the interests of his command. Upon the field of battle, cool, collected and observant, he commanded the entire respect and confidence of every officer and soldier under him, and the only censure ever cast upon him was that he always exposed himself too recklessly. At the time he was struck down he was standing in the rear of a battery, directing a change in the elevation of one of the guns. The tears shed by his men on the occasion, and the grief felt by his entire brigade, are the proudest tribute that can be given the gallant dead. From the time of my assuming command of the brigade, until I was ordered off the field, the fire of the enemy was very warm.

Cowan's battery had several men wounded, and had nearly used up all its ammunition, and yet, from orders received by me, had to be kept in position. The McLendon battery lost several men and horses, and were exposed to such a heavy fire as to render the use of their guns exceedingly hazardous. I sent Captain T. B. Sykes, the assistant inspector general, to inform Major General Loring of the state of affairs, and learned through him, on his return, that both Generals Buford's and Featherston's brigade were moving off to the rear, and that I was directed to bring off my brigade in the rear of General Featherston's. The enemy were pressing us closely at the time, so that I deemed it best to move off by the left flank through the fields, rather than by the right, down the road, and by so doing

induced the enemy to believe that I was moving to the left, I thus deceived the enemy and avoided any serious pursuit.

After moving a little more than a mile, I received an order from the Major General to leave my artillery, move out the regular line and take position in front of General Featherston's brigade. The march was continued in this order for the next twenty four hours' during which time we made about forty miles.

It is proper to mention that, in assuming the second line of battle, about half past one o'clock, one section of the McLendon battery was ordered to the rear, as there was no position for it, and that Lieutenant Merren, commanding, made his way with it, first across Baker's Creek, and finally with that portion of the army on the left, to Vicksburg. The guns of the other section, under Captain Jacob Culbertson, as well as those of Cowan's battery, were abandoned, by order of the Major General commanding, during the first night's march, owing to the impossibility of taking them over the roads we were forced to follow.

Captain Culbertson brought off his horses, harness and men. Captain Cowan did the same, but, on the march, he and all his men left the command, and have not been heard from since.

The forced march from the battle field to Crystal Springs, to Rimes' ferry, and thence to Jackson, was over rough stony roads, and made by men much worn down by fatigue, and many of them bare-footed. Under these circumstances it is not at all surprising that many of them broke down and straggled; and some doubtless were picked up by the enemy.

Accompanying this report you will find a paper [marked A] containing a list of the killed, wounded and missing.

In closing my report, I cannot omit my commendation of the way in which the officers and troops of this brigade behaved. The officers, one and all, behaved well, so much so that I cannot particularize any without being invidious. The troops were in fine spirits, and I have never seen any more anxious to meet the enemy.

I am much indebted to Captains Ellis and Sykes, the adjutant and inspector generals of General Tilghman's staff, for the prompt and efficient aid given me on the field, who, notwithstanding the gloom cast over them by the death of their chief, promptly reported themselves to me for duty, and, by their gallant conduct, are entitled to the gratitude of their country.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. E. REYNOLDS,  
Colonel Commanding Brigade.

## REPORT OF BRIGADIER GENERAL FEATHERSTON.

HEADQUARTERS FEATHERSTON'S BRIGADE, }  
May 28, 1863. }

Major GEORGE McKNIGHT,  
*Assistant Adjutant General :*

SIR: In obedience to the order of Major General Loring, of this date, I beg leave to submit the following report of the operations of my brigade on Baker's Creek, near Edwards' depot, on the 15th and 16th of this month :

On Friday, the 15th, about three o'clock, in the evening, the troops on the south side of Big Black river, encamped around Edwards' depot, were marched in the direction of Clinton, on the road leading from Edwards' depot to Clinton. Major General Loring's division was in front, forming the right wing of the army; my brigade formed a part of this division. We were moved some four miles on this road, in the direction of Clinton, crossing Baker's Creek on a bridge, and then turning directly to the right on a cross road leading to the main thoroughfare from Edwards' depot to Raymond. After reaching the main road from Edwards' depot to Raymond, Loring's division was halted for the night, and bivouacked on the sides of the road. One regiment, and five companies from a second, were placed on picket duty from my brigade, during the night. The divisions of Generals Stevenson and Bowen were in the rear of General Loring's, and bivouacked for the night, one on the Clinton and Edwards' Depot road, and the other between that and the Raymond and Edwards' Depot road. The distance between these roads, where our troops encamped, was about three miles. About eight o'clock, on the morning of the 16th, one of the enemy's batteries opened fire on the regiment on picket duty. This battery was planted on the Raymond road, about two miles from where our troops were bivouacked, in the direction of Raymond. My brigade was immediately put in line of battle on the right of the Raymond road, and General Buford's brigade on the left. This was done in obedience to an order from General Loring. General Pemberton rode up while the line of battle was forming, and approved the movement. Our batteries were placed in position on an eminence near the road, just in front of the infantry.

At this time, General Loring rode up from the front, and ordered the line of battle to be changed to a high hill or continuous ridge, some six hundred yards in rear of our line, as then established. Upon this ridge or hill Loring's division was placed in line of battle, Tilghman's brigade on the right of the division, and on the right of the Raymond road, my brigade on the left of Tilghman's, and on the right of the Raymond road, Buford's brigade on the left of mine, and on the left of the Raymond road. General Buford's left wing connected with General Bowen's right in the direction of the Clinton road.

Very soon after this line was formed, about eleven o'clock, in the forenoon, the enemy made their appearance in our front, sending forward a line of skirmishers on foot as well as one on horse-back. These skirmishers were met by our line of skirmishers in our front, and very soon fell back to the woods from which they emerged. General Pemberton was present when this line of battle was formed, and then went to the centre or left of the line. In this position our division remained until about twelve o'clock, when an order came from General Pemberton, directing General Buford to be moved farther to the left in the direction of the Clinton road, that he might take the position of General Bowen's division, which had been ordered to the support of General Stevenson's division, on the Clinton road. I was ordered to move my brigade to the left at the same time, and take the position vacated by General Buford's brigade. This order was promptly obeyed by General Buford and myself. My brigade remained in this position until two or three o'clock in the evening, within hearing of the guns on our left, where the battle was progressing. Up to this time no other demonstration had been made by the enemy on the Raymond road, except the one already mentioned.

About two or three o'clock, in the evening, I received an order from General Pemberton, through General Irving, to move my brigade to the left to the Clinton road, to the support of Generals Bowen and Stevenson, then engaging the enemy at that place. This order was promptly obeyed; General Irving and myself rode at the head of the column. We had a guide who carried us the nearest way. We travelled through the woods and over very rough ground, a distance of about two miles, before reaching the scene of conflict. The march was as rapid as possible under the circumstances; the troops moved at a double-quick the most of the way.

Upon arriving on the field, we found a large number of stragglers going to the rear in great confusion. General Buford's brigade had arrived on the field some thirty minutes in advance of mine. My brigade was halted near the Clinton road, and near where General Buford had formed a line of battle. Here we found no one to give us directions, or to tell us what to do. General Pemberton was not there, and no one present could tell us where he was. Neither of the major generals who had been conducting the battle was present on this part of the line. General S. D. Lee came up with a part of his brigade and attached them to the left of mine. The troops on this part of the line were then all placed in line, and ordered by General Irving to move on the enemy in front. After this line was formed and before the advance was made, an order came from General Pemberton to General Loring, as I learned from the latter, informing him that he had ordered his troops to fall back to Edwards' depot, and directing General Loring to protect his retreat with his division. General Lee was ordered to move with his brigade, as rapidly as practicable, to the ford on Baker's Creek, where the road from Raymond to the depot crosses it. I was ordered, soon after, to place my brigade in line of battle, so as to hold the enemy in check, and to hold my

position until our troops had all passed me in the direction of the depot.

This order was obeyed. Three regiments were placed in line so as to cover the different avenues of approach. Three pieces of artillery were held in the rear, and kept playing upon the enemy, who were cautiously advancing on our rear, as well as on our right and left flanks. As our army advanced in front, my brigade, with the artillery, was moved to the front and placed in a new position. This was done twice. In our last position the enemy advanced on our rear, as well as on the right and left flanks, and a brisk skirmish ensued, in which they were held completely in check, until the brigade and artillery were withdrawn slowly and in good order. During this skirmish, and, in fact, during the entire day, my brigade behaved well. All orders were promptly obeyed, and an eagerness to meet the enemy was manifested during the engagement by the whole command. The three pieces of artillery used by me, to protect the retreat, belonged to Captain Bowanchand's battery. They were well served; both skill and courage were shown by the officers and men attached to these guns. My last position on the field was not abandoned until I was ordered by Gen. Loring to do so, and move my command towards the depot as rapidly as practicable. I moved my command to the Raymond road, and turned towards the ford on Baker's Creek; but found, on going some half a mile in that direction, that the head of our column (Loring's division) had turned to the left, leaving the main road, and were then passing southeast, through an open field, in a direction down Baker's Creek. I followed the column with my brigade. Gen. Buford's brigade was in front. I rode to the head of the column, and learned from General Loring that the enemy were in possession of the ford on Baker's Creek, where we expected to cross on the Raymond road. This occurred about sunset, or, perhaps, a little later. I learned from General Loring that he had procured the services of Dr. Williamson as a guide, and intended to find a crossing somewhere below on Baker's Creek, and then endeavor to cross Big Black at the railroad bridge, or some place south of that, and join the main body of our troops on the other side. Dr. Williamson was an old citizen of the country, living at Edwards' depot, and knew well the character of the country and the fords and ferries on Big Black and Baker's Creek. He was intelligent and reliable. As our column moved off from the Raymond road to the southeast, we discovered, a little after sunset, a large fire at the depot, which was supposed to be the depot buildings fired by the enemy. Dr. Williamson led the column by a blind path through a very rough country, down Baker's Creek to Mr. Harvey's, near the ford on the road leading from Edwards' depot to Auburn. Here we halted, and consulted with Mr. Harvey as to the propriety of crossing Baker's Creek at this ford. Mr. Harvey informed General Loring that sixty regiments had passed down the creek that day or the day before. Harvey was unwilling to pilot our column from Baker's Creek to Big Black; he professed not to be able to do so. Dr. Williamson was unable to pilot us beyond this point, and thought it impossible for us to get through the swamp on this side

of the Big Black, so as to strike the stream anywhere below the bridge, unless we went as low down as Baldwin's ferry. At this ferry we had no means of crossing the stream, provided we could reach it without encountering a heavy column of the enemy. Upon consulting with General Buford and myself, General Loring determined to take the road to Crystal Springs, and thence to Jackson, as the safest and surest. Such seemed to be the opinion of all that were called into the consultation. The column was then moved forward, all night on Saturday and all day on Sunday. Sunday night it was halted near the Crystal Springs, and rested until ten o'clock, on Monday, when the march was continued, by easy advances, to this place. The march from the battle-field to Crystal Springs, running through the entire night and day, was a very hard and laborious one, but borne by the troops with fortitude and determination. I was then, and am now, of the opinion, that this division having been thrown in the rear, and held there, protecting the retreat until the enemy had gained possession of the ford on the Raymond road, and of the bridge on the Clinton road, the only direction in which we could move so as to save the division, or at least to prevent great loss, was the road taken to Crystal Springs. To have attempted to march into our lines at Big Black without a guide, and without the means of crossing Big Black when we reached it, would have been very hazardous.

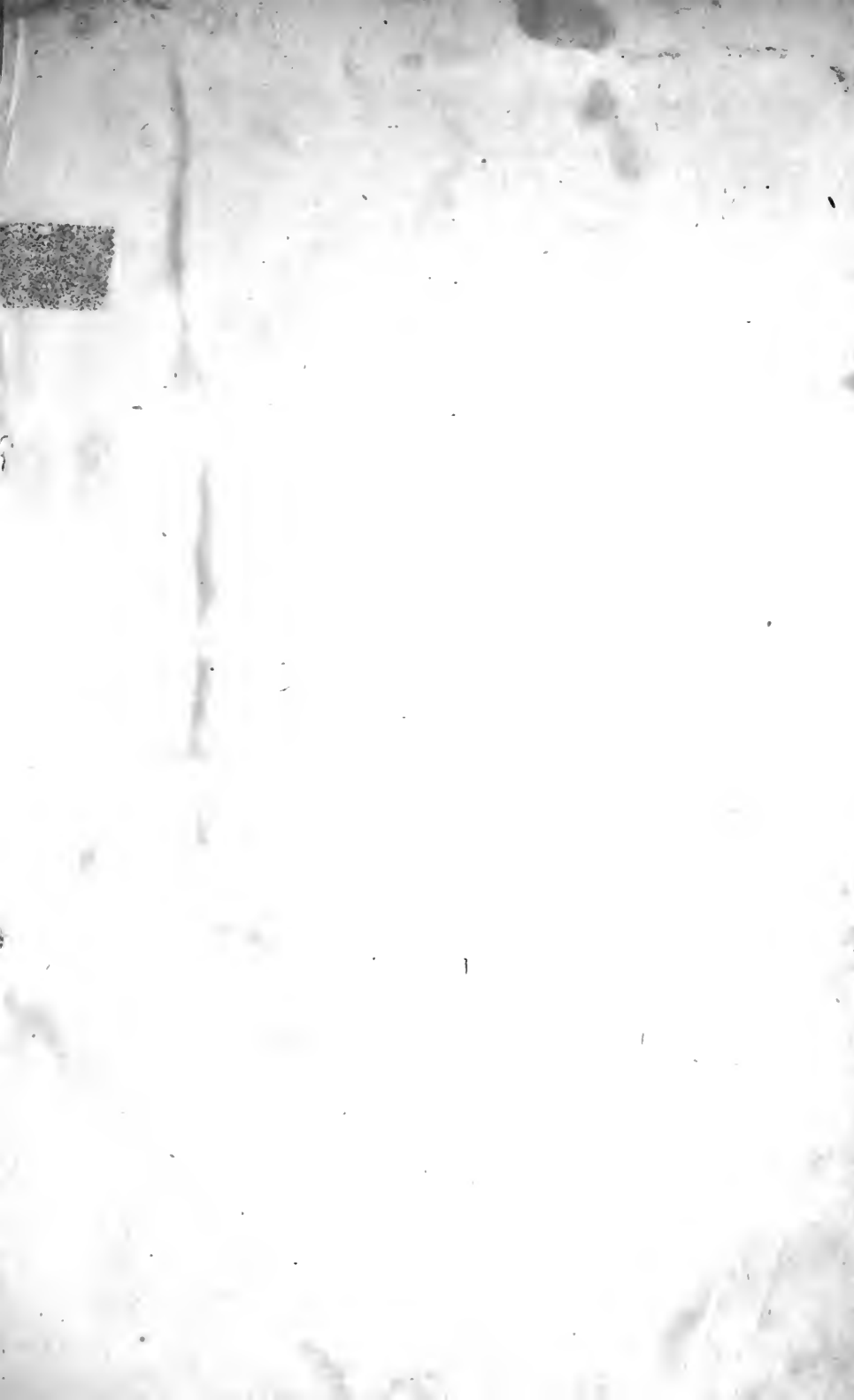
I send herewith a list of the casualties.

I am, Major, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

W. S. FEATHERSTON,  
*Brigadier General commanding.*







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